

## Healing Influence of Art

September 07, 2010 2:00 AM Melanie N. Cross  
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“Research indicates that art activities in healthcare settings reduce anxiety and pain, shorten hospital stays, and increase immunity,” says Sean Ransom, director of the Patricia Trost Friedler Center for Psychosocial Oncology. With these goals in mind, Ransom and his colleagues have launched an Arts in Medicine (AIM) program for patients of Tulane Cancer Center and pediatric patients.



Judy Morgan, caregiver for her son, who is a patient at Tulane Cancer Center, tries her hand at a painting project during an Arts in Medicine program. (Photo by Guillermo Cabrera-Rojas)

Becki Kula, artist-in-residence, engages patients in arts programming and supervises student volunteers from the [Newcomb Art Department](#) at Tulane, organizes fundraising activities and solicits in-kind donations of art supplies. She also spearheads arts-related events, such as musical performances, literary readings and visits from teaching artists.

AIM activities, such as decorative painting of ceiling and wall tiles and headscarf painting workshops, will be provided on a regular basis in the infusion center, in the patient resource library and in the patient reception area.

For inpatients, the cancer center developed an “Art Cart” that can be wheeled into patient common areas in Tulane Medical Center and an “Arts-on-Call” program in the Bone Marrow Transplant Unit, through which the artist-in-residence will engage in one-on-one bedside activities with patients and their families.

“To ensure that the goals of the program are met, we have created a volunteer advisory board consisting of six prominent members of the arts and business communities,” Ransom says. “Although our current focus is on the visual arts, plans are to expand into other forms of artistic expression, including creative movement and dance, music, expressive writing and even improvisational comedy.”

Ransom and Kula also plan to utilize the wall space in the [Tulane Cancer Center](#) Comprehensive Clinic as a gallery not only to showcase patients' artwork, but also to display on-loan and donated works of local artists and photographers.

“We believe that artistic displays in the cancer center common areas will provide a more pleasing visual environment and in turn have a positive impact on overall patient satisfaction,” Kula says.

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